

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3988

NGINFO RUFNPS/USDEL JEC PARIS 5677

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: VS, PINT

SUBJECT: PRO-ADMINISTRATION SENATORS REQUEST PRIME MINISTER KHIEM

EXPLANATION OF NATIONAL SITUATION

1. A GROUP OF 22 PRO-ADMINISTRATION SENATORS PLUS ONE NON-BLOC MEMBER HAS SIGNED A RESOLUTION ASKING PRIME MINISTER TRAN THIEN KHIEM TO APPEAR BEFORE THE UPPER HOUSE TO ANSWER A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CRUCIAL SITUATION FACING THE NATION.

2. THE RESOLUTION, DATED MARCH 20, WAS SENT TO UPPER HOUSE CHAIRMAN TRAN VAN LAM AND PROPOSED THAT THE LATTER, ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 40 OF THE SVN CONSTITUTION SUMMON THE PRIME MINISTER TO A FULL SESSION OF THE UPPER HOUSE. ARTICLE 40 PROVIDES THAT ONE THIRD OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF EITHER LEGISLATIVE BODY HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUEST THE PRIME MINISTER OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO APPEAR BEFORE IT TO ANSWER QUESTIONS REGARDING THE EXECUTION OF NATIONAL POLICY. TWENTY SENATORS WOULD CONSTITUTE ONE-THIRD OF THE UPPER HOUSE.

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3. A RESOLUTION REQUESTS ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. WHAT IS THE MILITARY SITUATION IN THE FOUR MILITARY REGIONS  
AND WHAT ARE THE DIFFICULTIES BEING ENCOUNTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT?  
B. WHAT ARE THE MEASURES ENVISIONED TO COPE WITH THE  
PRESENT SITUATION?

C. WHAT ABOUT THE EVACUATION PLANS AND MEASURES TO PROTECT  
THE POPULATION?

D. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE NATION?

E. HAS THE GOVERNMENT TAKEN CONCRETE MEASURES AND MADE  
ASSURANCES TO THE PEOPLE THAT THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE DEFENSE OF  
THE FATHERLAND ARE DETERMINED TO LIVE OR PERISH WITH THE PEOPLE  
IN THIS GLOOMIEST PERIOD IN THE NATIONAL HISTORY?

4. THE 23 SENATORS WHO SIGNED THE RESOLUTION INCLUDE 15

DEMOCRACY BLOC MEMBERS: PHAM NUU PHIEN, NGUYEN VAN AN,  
HOANG XUAN HAO, NGUYEN KHOA PHUOC, LE VINH KIEN, DOAN VAN  
CUU, NGUYEN VAN NGUU, NGUYEN VAN THO, NGUYEN VAN NHUE,  
KIM KHANH, TRANG TAN TOAN, NGUYEN VAN DIEU, DAO HUU PHAN,  
PHAM THONG AND NGUYEN DUC TRANG; 7 UNITED BLOC MEMBERS:  
LE VAN DONG, NGUYEN THON DO, LE SI CA, NGO VAN NHAM,  
NGUYEN QUOI, KHIEU THIEN HE AND PHAM NAM TRUONG. IN ADDITION,  
ONE NON-BLOC MEMBER, SENATOR TRAN DUY DON OF THE LOTUS SLATE,  
SIGNED THE RESOLUTION.

5. SEVERAL EMBASSY CONTACTS WHO SIGNED RESOLUTION HAVE PRIVATELY  
SHCARACTERIZED IT AS A "POSITIVE ACTION" TO ENABLE THE ADMINISTRATION  
TO PUBLICIZE ITS PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR RESPONDING TO THE CRITICAL  
CHALLENGES FACING SVN. THE LAST SUCH APPEARANCE BY THE PRIME  
MINISTER AND HIS CABINET, IN JULY 1974 BEFORE THE LOWER HOUSE,  
WAS CONSIDERED A SUCCESS FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN DEFUSING OPPOSI-  
TION CRITICISM. THE PROPOSED QUESTIONS ARE GOOD ONES WHICH NEED  
ANSWERING AND A STRONG PERFORMANCE BY PRIME MINISTER COULD GO A  
LONG WAY TOWARDS CALMING FEARS OF THE POPULATION.

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